

**Reading about
“The Benibana Picturescroll”**

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YAMAGATA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

CONTENTS

Introduction

- 1 What is “The Benibana Picturescroll”?
- 2 Manufacturing Process to Current Goods
3. Some Remarkable Scenes
4. Depicted Figures
5. Conclusion – What the Painter Intends

Acknowledgment

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Introduction

‘Aoso’ (青苧) and ‘Benibana’ (紅花) was two main special products which were counted as current goods of the cargo transportation age in the Mogami River. And they were also famous for special products in Dewa (出羽) area in Yamagata in the Edo period. Last year the author published the report about ‘Aoso’ transportation in this bulletin and this year ‘Benibana’ is focused as a theme to be pursued.

Here, as the historical materials of the pictures that show the manufacturing process of benibana, three pictures are found in this prefecture. One of them is ‘The Benibana Folding Screen’ 「紅花屏風」(六曲一双) painted by Eiko Aoyama (青山永耕) who belonged to Kano School (狩野派). Aoyama was from Rokuta (六田), Higashine (東根) in Yamagata. He was actively painting between 1817 and 1879. The screen seems to have been painted at about the end of the Edo period. The second one was painted by Kazan Yokoyama (横山崱山) who was one of the painters of Kyoto Shijo School (京都四条派). On the half of the screen, the land of Musashi (武蔵国) was painted and on the other half, Kanagase, Okawara in Oshu (奥州大河原金ヶ瀬) of 1825 was drawn. But the third of the same kind of the screen exists. This was painted by the anonymous person. It may have painted during the Edo period, but its origin is ambiguous and its painting technique is not high level. The screen has been stocked as a personal stuff and this has had little chance to be shown to the appreciators.

In this paper, the author chooses “The Benibana Picturescroll” as an object for examining and reads the real meanings in the picture, comparing real lives of the people and the phases of the farmers in the villages.

1. What is “The Benibana Picturescroll”?

“The Benibana Picturescroll” mentioned above is preserved by Akira Takeda (武田陽) who lives in Jinmachi (神町), Higashine, and the Takedas is one of old illustrious families that succeed to a name “Hanjuro (半十郎)”. The eighth “Hanjuro” who was born in 1847 was the town headman of Higashine. The ninth was Juro (重郎) and the present head Akira (陽) is the tenth. It is not clear why the scroll was delivered to the Takedas, but “The Agricultural Scroll of Murayama (村山)” is also preserved by the family.

These two scrolls seem to have been painted at about the same period. Among them, “The Benibana Picturescroll” happened to be found in 1957. The size of the scroll is 740cm long and 35.4cm wide. It has no stamp or signature and its painted time is uncertain. Some say that it was Eiko Aoyama who painted “The Benibana Folding Screen”. But the touch of brushing is rough and the difference of painting manner is easy to be recognized. It might be a draft of “The Benibana Folding Screen” but the design is decisively different.

True or not, this picture scroll shows the processing scenes of benibana manufacturing around Murayama of Dewa about the latter of the Edo period or at the end of that age. Anyhow, the scroll is valuable to show us how benibana was processed and manufactured as current goods.

2. Manufacturing Process to Current Goods

“The Benibana Picturescroll” shows the process in the farmer’s garden from its cultivation at Yamagata, Dewa to the consignment as products. Here, later on, what are drawn in the pictures and the process of its manufacturing are minutely examined.

① Cultivating of Land

The picture shows the scenes of cultivating the land for sowing seeds of benibana. Six farmers are engaging in the work. Among them, some farmers are taking a rest with smoking on the field lane. A woman who is giving milk to her baby is pleasantly drawn. Two children are enjoying climbing up trees. This may be a daily landscape of villages, playing children, a smiling mother and working farmers, all of them are a usual and peaceful village life. The hoes being used here are made of wood with an iron blade at the U shaped tip. This style of hoe was not used until the Meiji era came.



Cultivating of Land

② Sowing Seeds

A husband and a wife are drawn. The wife is holding a basket in arms and sowing seeds. The husband is covering the soil over the seeds, following her work. Maybe, the work is to make ridges of soil for sowing. Sowing work is done by farmers with their body bending and with picking some pieces of seeds at the tip of fingers. But in this picture, standing postures of the farmers are shown in sowing seeds. Was this posture usual in those days? If so, the seeds are scattered so that they need to be eliminated in early time. At present time, sowing is done at the end of April.



Sowing Seeds

③ Weeding and Eliminating

Farmers are working to weed and eliminate for the help of bringing up young benibana. Three men are hand-working in benibana fields with their

body stooping. An old woman is shouting on the field lane and one of the farmers seems to answer her with his face up. Such a minute drawing is also shown to draw other three men in the upward part.



Weeding and Eliminating

④ Plucking Flowers

The plucking scene is drawn with plucking each petal with hands. In the scroll, ten of men and women are engaging in the works. A man with a pipe needs to be mentioned later. In the distance farmers are busy in plucking petals. This scene tells us vividly the satisfactory atmosphere in the harvest season. The plucking work must be finished early in the morning when dew protects fingers from thistle of the flowers. All of the people in the fields put on the protecting cloth on their backs of hands.

Benibana is well grown in the dewy area in the morning along the Mogami River in Murayama. But, actually, at the harvest time the weather is apt to be free from fog along the Mogami River. Therefore, the morning dew is important for benibana harvesting. At the present time, plucking season is at its peak in the middle of July.



Plucking Flowers

⑤ Rinse of Petals

This process is to rinse the picked petals in a basket in water to clear away dusts. Two farmers are in water with their dress rolled up, and wash the petals eagerly. One of them rolls up his wear hem to his belly. At that time, such a working posture seems to have been queer. Beside them, an old man with a pipe in his mouth is watching these working men with his dress tucked up in the stream. But he may have nothing to do with the work. He may be a guard or a foreman. To look more minutely at the picture, a lantern is found hanging on the tree. This may mean the work is continued even after dark. Because the plucked petals must be rinsed just within the day of harvest. The report says, in the highest time, the work is done all through the night. The red-tinted side of the lantern tells that the work was already done in the dusk. It is a bit exaggerated that the plucked petals are piled up high like a mountain along the river bank, but large scale working site looked like that.

⑥ Crumpling of Petals

This process is to crumple petals with naked feet in the half-sized pail, pouring a little water. Petals here become more orange tint. In the scroll, men are rumpling them with their body naked and some are pouring water into the pail. Others are crumpling the petals with hands.



Rinse of Petals / Crumpling of Petals

⑦ Rinsing of Petals

Here, the crumpled petals are removed to a basket to get rid of a yellow pigment called Kikejiru (黄気汁). Generally speaking, as the Kikejiru is rinsing off, the quality of beni (紅) becomes refined. The better quality of beni is made by rain or dew in the night and if not, more transaction is needed to rinse the petals longer. In the scroll, a man is bringing a basket nakedly with a loincloth. It is not certain that the work finished or not. Beside him, a woman is working in a river with an apron and a sash for holding up tucked sleeves. But she failed to rinse petals in a basket from which the petals were dispersed in the river. Her face and a gesture with a disappointed expression look funny. The painter never fails to catch a minute gesture which happens in daily lives.



Rinsing of Petals

⑧ Fermentation of Petals

At the next stage, petals are laid slightly on a straw mats. This scene is drawn at the upper part of the scroll. And the work is done at the foreground in a row of the three cottages. The petals in a row are evenly showered by water, and they are remained as they are for a day or two. For this process, a good ventilation is needed and the petals must be turned out several times after careful observation. So, the petals gradually ferment and have tinted to red. Too much fermentation gives a failure called “Flowers abortive” (花流れ). This technique needs a long and natured experience. In the scroll, watering to the petals is left out. And more, three farmers are talking cheerfully, touching cakes of petals in the second cottage of three ridges of houses. Maybe, this scene is drawn to show the turning out the cakes. If so, this scene should have drawn nearer to the fermentation scene for easy recognition.

Anyhow, the tool is called ‘a petal steamer’ for fermentation. This is about 1 meter square made of wood and about ten centimetres wood frames stand at each side. This is also drawn in the “Benibana Folding Screen” by Eiko Aoyama. But in this case, some simplified steamer is drawn without any wood frame. Without the frame, petals can’t be arranged in some thickness. On the other hand, turning of cakes becomes easier so that the check of petals is done easily.

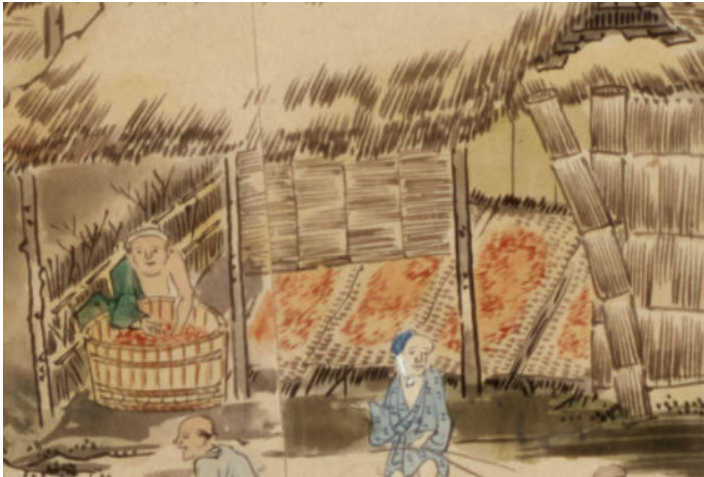
⑨ Kneading of Petals

The process is done by pounding the fermented petals in a mortar with a pestle or rumpling with hands or treading them with feet. In this process, Kikejiru is oozed out that can be used for dyeing. The report said women gathered to be shared it. In the scroll, a man is rumpling petals in the pail with hands at the corner of the front cottage and the center of the room, the other man works for fermenting. Soon round shaped benimochi (紅餅) is coming out after its stickiness. But in the scroll, the last stage of making benimochi is not drawn. The painter seemed to omit this scene.

If this process of kneading is done at the second cottage, this scene can be under stood easily. And in the third cottage, nobody is drawn without a pail. Only a slight – colored pink cloth is hanging up. Perhaps, this scene seems a self – made cotton cloth dyed with benibana color is drying up. If a

woman who is dyeing cloth with benibana color is drawn, the situation is easily understood. In “The Benibana Folding Screen” this is easily understood.

In “The Benibana Folding Screen” such a scene as this is just painted up.



Fermentation of Petals / Kneading of Petals

⑩ Arranging of Flowers

This process is to arrange the round benimochi in order on straw mats. Usually they are put 13 cakes horizontally and 26 cakes vertically. At the space in front of the cottages five of men and women were sitting to work. A mother looks busy, laying her baby backside. Maybe this scene tries to draw farmers being fully occupied the work.



Arranging of Flowers

⑪ Treading of Petals

After arrangement of ‘benimochi’, another straw mat is put on them and

the farmers tread them with naked feet to make a fat 'benimochi' flat. This process is called 'treading of Petals'. A man is found, treading 'benimochi' in a slow motion, though he is easily ignored.

⑫ Drying Petals

After treading petals, the sandwiched straw mats are turned upside down and the upper mat is taken off. Then the fat benimochi are carefully ripped off using a thin stick for benimochi not to lie flat on the mat. The sticks which three men have are such a tool to hit. One of them is just working for it. In the screen, women are using this stick and dry the petals.

While the petals arranged flat under the sun shine, they repeat this work several times a day. This work seems simple, but it has some difficult points. The importance is to dry them in average and too much dry up occurs the some dark color on them.

The process of ⑩⑪⑫ above is rather simple work. So old men and children can help the works they can earn some money, the report said. Especially 'drying petals' was often the work for them and they got 5 mon (文) per and piece of mat and turning petals was also the same amount of money. This also means that this work is good for helping and the work should be done swiftly.

In the scroll, a sunny space is kept in front of the cottage, and a series of the work is done on the straw mats. And the work needed a wide space of a big farmers' yard.



Treading Petals / Drying Petals

⑬ Packaging Petal Cakes

This scene is to package the dried petal cakes as goods and to crate them. Perhaps the grand mansion is a wholesaler's. At the open veranda, the wholesaler and the merchant in informal dress with abacus in his left hand are negotiating. At the last stage of processing, the merchant comes from Kyoto. Scrutinizing the goods, they are trading for shipment. At the right side eaves, a big scale is hanging. The mansion seems a big merchant's. At the bottom of the left room, a man is working of packing benimochi with a scale.

As a standard of packing, during the Kyoho (享保) period, 120kg package of 500 monme (匁) made 1 da (駄), which is a suitable weight for horseback. The big package of several packs of 500 monme was conveyed to Kyoto or Osaka wrapped with an oiled paper. The oiled paper is drawn somewhere in the picture. Some scenes are drawn as the funny ones that an old man turned back because of too heavy packs on his back. A heavy package of petals seemed too big for old men to life up.

Anyhow, a brown oiled paper of package is seen indoors and other three outdoors. The package has too triangular tips at the both side. Some doubt is occurred what they are. And more at the next scene it suddenly changes to round-shaped. It seems that the package is covered with straw mats.





Packaging Petal Cakes

⑭ Convey by Land and Shipment

“Benibana” and “Aoso”, the special products, were usually conveyed on horseback by land to the bank of Oishida, where the shipping officials stayed, but in the scroll, such a scene is not drawn. The scroll shows us only that the packages were loaded off from horseback. The packages wrapped with an oiled papers are drawn as round-shaped ones. The process of packaging is omitted and some interruption is occurred.

Talking of the bank of shipment, the Mogami River and the Oishida Bank are never drawn. Maybe, the bank is a small ford of the village near Oishida named Shima (島), Ohori (大堀), where only the rice was shipped at that time .

Or, there are three difficult points to sail down, but all the packaged were not conveyed by land but by water. Conveying by water was more economical than that by land. If the painter wanted to draw the Oishida Bank, more vivid and prosperous scenes should have depicted more realistically. And on “The Benibana Folding Screen” by Aoyama, the scenes of convey on horseback and shipping on the bank of Oishida are drawn nowhere. Suddenly, the ships with trading marks are counted on the sea and the conveying scene by wheel is drawn.

Except the screen, ‘The Benibana Picturescroll’ tells that the painter did not make much of shipping scenes.



Convey by Land and Shipment

3. Some Remarkable Scenes



(1) Skylarks to Express Seasons

Two brown skylarks are drawn in the sky of the process ① ‘Tilling the field’ and ② ‘Sowing seeds’. Though two creatures are easily ignored, the sky is a symbol of spring. Two birds seem to be a couple. A farmer with a hoe looking up them is clearly painted. The painter seems to tell the cultivating benibana begins in spring.




Seasonal two skylarks

(2) Name of the Shop “” (Yamaju)

The shop name ‘’ is drawn in the two scenes in the scroll. Between the process of ④ ‘Petals Picking’ and ⑤ ‘Rinse of Petal’, two baskets with the design of  are hanging under the eaves of the cottage.

This sign can be seen in the process of ⑭ ‘Shipping’, though it is not so clear. This sign has been used successively by the Takedas, who has been a holder of the scroll. This also means that the scroll is shown the work process of the Takeda Family. But the history tells another celebrated family used this sign. That was the Rihei Satos (佐藤利兵衛), whose domicile is at Tokamachi, Yamagata (山形市十日町) and who is famous for benibana trading. So it is hard to discriminate which is which or the sign in the scroll belonged to quite another family.



Shop's trademark () ヤマジュウ

(3) Shape of Benimochi

Now, look at the shape of benimochi arranged on straw mats between the process ⑩ ‘Arrangement of Petals’ and ⑫ ‘Drying Petals’. To think about the benimochi in Dewa, Yamagata, we have to mention the shape of Musashi (武蔵国) drawn in “The Benibana Folding Screen” by Kazan Yokoyama. The reason is because the benimochi was made into the size of a human head of adult persons. These benimochi were arranged in five on each line and ten of them were lined in two rows on the wooden plate. They were just brought into the cottage with two men, lifting them with a power. Very different size to compare with those of Yamagata!

To examine the size, the document tells as follows.

“Sansai-Zue” (『三才図絵』) and “Benibana-Retsuden”(『紅花列伝』)

report the size of benimochi in Mogami (最上) is shaped in a coin size and, in western districts, they are about 12cm or 9cm bigger. They depend on each art. The “Honzo-Komoku-Keimo”. (『本草綱目啓蒙』) explains these sizes more minutely -(omitted)- that in the northern countries the size is small and thin. This size is caused by taking off petals and pressing them and arranging under two mats.

From these reports, the size of Yamagata benimochi was small like a coin and they are traditionally succeeded.

And in the next report, the shape is focused to discuss. In the same report as seen above.

The report is delivered to the office by Yaemon (弥右衛門), Nagasaki village, Murayama county. (The note tells that this was offered in November before the Bunsei (文政) period).

- (Omitted) -

How to make the shape of benimochi depends on each country and, in Mogami area, that is done as it was reported and in Yonezawa (米沢) it is shaped round in hand and soon it is arranged on a straw mat and , in Aizu (会津), its shape is rhombus.

In this report above, ‘in Mogami area’ means benimochi in Murayama is small and a coin-shaped. But, here, some question occurs. Look at the shape of benimochi in the scroll. The shape there doesn’t look like a coin-round or oval. They are really triangular or rhombic. Then some doubt occurs that the scroll was painted in Aizu. According to “Aizu-Nosho,” (『会津農書』) benibana was also cultivated in Aizu area. This problem must be pursued in the viewpoint of a comparative cultural history. In the report this doubt is stopped only to point it out.



Shape of benimochi (triangle)

(4) Cotton Dyed with Kikejiru (黄気汁)

The cotton cloth dyed with Kikejiru, produced in the process of ⑦ ‘Rinsing’ and ⑨ Kneading of Petals, is called “The cotton dyed with flower’s pigment” (「花染木綿」). People used the pigment skilfully and dyed baby clothes and under clothes to wear self-made ones. The costumes dyed with benibana merchandized in Kyoto were too expensive for them. In the scroll, such a scene was not depicted. The cotton cloth above was hang and dried under the eaves.

On the other hand, the screen shows that three women were dyeing bending on the pail, and the dyed cloth was drawn on a wash-line pole. But the cloth was dyed in clear red, which went well with the reality of that period. People’s clothes dyed with benibana pigment were more simple and slightly rouged. The painter of “The Benibana Picturescroll” seems to depict the situation more realistic.



Dyed cotton (cloth hanging above a pail)

(5) Frantic Sheltering

At the last stage of the process ⑫, people behave very frantically. The dark cloud covers the sky suddenly and trees are turbulent, and a sudden gust of wind comes. Farmers in a couple bring the mat of dried petals into a cottage, getting rattled. Dried petals are very weak against rain. The clothes of men are ripped off to their back and one of them exposes his hip without any underpants. Here, their appearance is no problem. A very hasty farmer drops benimochi to the ground. Benimochi are scattered everywhere and they are screaming at the panic.

This scene is vividly depicted and the atmosphere of them is well delivered. It is very understandable that, at that age, they are frantic to make benimochi, fighting against the weather.



Hasty sheltering work

4. Depicted Figures

(1) Flowers Plucking Work with a Pipe

At the scene of ④ of “Flowers (Petals) Plucking”, ten of men and women are working in the field. A man at the center is smoking a pipe in his mouth, and smiling peacefully. A woman at the right beside of him is working as he does. “Plucking” is the work that must be free from flowers thistles in a dew time of early morning. Actually, farmers do not smoke during the work, so the picture shows something left. But “a woman peddler” would often come to the field to sell some sweets and a fire for smoking. Perhaps, some men had smoking even during the work.



Petal's plucking with a pipe

(2) Various Scenes for Trading

Many scenes for trading are shown between the process ④ ‘Petals Plucking’ and ⑤ ‘Rinsing’. The farmers couple of benibana cultivator hand the plucked petals at the field lane. The figure who gets them looks a salesclerk with a straw hat lettered his shop mark on it. Such a man appears in the village to get the best information of benibana harvest as soon as possible. At the harvest, villages were prosperous, because many merchants and salesclerks visited there.



Farmer showing benibana to a merchant

At the left, a man is drawn with a scale basket on the shoulder. He is called 'sanbe' (サンベ) who collects benibana directly from the cultivators. He looks bringing goods, but slight motion is drawn in the painting.



Sanbe (collector) with baggages

And more left side, a trader is scaling the collected benibana or a benibana manufacturer is depicted to show the trading scenes. A 'sanbe' is sitting down, looking rather tired.

And the bottom of left side, a merchant is calculating something, opening a note and pondering with an abacus in his hand. Beside him, a clerk is holding his head at a loss. On the other hand, out of the garden, a 'sanbe' and a good costumed trader who seems to come from other country are talking about the price of goods.



Merchant with an abacus in his hand

The trader negotiate with the 'sanbe' and delivers a cash. Some of money are scattered on the ground. And also at the left side, three men of a native village are standing around the trader, who can not get a suitable negotiation. The cash note is thrown away from him. Three men are smoking, looking with enough satisfaction. At the scene of packaging, the negotiation done in a fine merchant yard seems the last one to send them to Kyoto.



Negotiation for price?



Merchant at a loss in negotiation

Such trading scenes as these mean, showing its prosperous dealing, that there are various styled ways for benibana trading. Actually, they had the market at Nanokamachi (七日町) and Tokamachi (十日町) in Yamagata and the goods were competed for trading. Many dramas seem to be done in trading and tried to fathom the other intention.

In the scroll, a figure is drawn holding a trading note under his arms in a traveler's style. At the other side of a river, a trader is smoking with a pipe, looking a busy working beside a brown and a white horse.



Last trading for shipping

(3) Quarrelling Scene

The scene, succeeding to the tradings above, is the scruffling scene of four men. Before doing such a struggle, they had a drinking party on the straw mat. Some vase is fallen down and a liquid is run out. That may be unrefined sake. A woman calls them to stop their quarrelling. Two men are

wrestling and other two look to be a peace maker. They may fail the negotiation of trading. But the next document gives a key to solve this.



Scuffling scene

The price of benibana easily goes up and down in a short term comparing with other trading goods. The trading sometimes succeeds without any clear reasons, depending on a scale. Yamagata is far off from Kyoto, the people concerning with benibana trading are sometimes naked, sometimes in gorgeous costumes with straw hats. Most of them look fanatic. If a stranger sees that, they are quite disgusted with them.

Other materials are also pointed out.

Benibana Markets.

People make a market in the highest season and many buyers come down for trading and at that time, people become amazed and they sometimes ignore their children or parents. Nowhere can be seen as such a confusion and they want to show its prosperity to strangers. Benibana merchants are also prosperous.

Besides, the passage of “Yamagata-Ishihiroi” (『山形石ひろい』) describes the markets of Nanokamachi (七日町) to tell “Benibana traders come to buy them and they look just fanatic persons”.

These reports tell the merchants and traders to be fanatic to compete together. Some other cases of benibana trading are seen to be same confusion. The scenes drawn in the scroll sounds real as they are. In a

peaceful village, people become very excited and small things stir up to the reason of struggling.

These scuffling scenes are drawn also in the scene of Kazan Yokoyama just mentioned before. In the screen, the scene of Musashi (武蔵-埼玉県) of 6th of Bunsei year (文政6年) at the former half and that of Kanagase, Okawara in Oshu (奥州大河原金ヶ瀬) of 8th of Bunsei year at the latter half are depicted. The working scenes are is minutely well drawn. This is not accidentally agreed to the scroll, but such accidents as these happens sometimes everywhere.

(4) People visiting villages

In the scroll, merchants and farmers working for benibana are mainly painted, but more careful observation makes it clear that strangers visit the villages in the high time of trading.

① Fish Mongers

A fish monger is drawn to sell fish with a pole for shouldering. An active and a pleasant monger comes to sell fresh fish. In a basket, reddish fish like a porgy are seen. In the “The Meibutsu-Beninosode” (『名物紅の袖』), fish mongers come every day from Sendai to Yamagata. Murayama area is not so far from Sendai, if they take the route of Sasaya (笹谷), Futakuchi (二口) and Sekiyama (関山). Various peddlers and merchants visited the villages in benibana harvest season and this means many merchants or traders also came there. They knew much money was spent among the people in cash.

A man is noticed who stands at the left corner with fish on a spit in his hand. He looks to come for with a straw hat on his back, and he wears gaiters to walk a long way. He may be a peddler to sell fish of rivers. He looks an amateur fish monger, but at that season even no professional monger could manage his own trading.

And in the Benibana Folding Scroll Eiko Aoyama, a candy peddler visits the busy farmer’s yard. There, children begs the farmer to buy a candy.



Fish Monger

② Woman with Water Pail

In the scene of the process ⑤, at the back of the piled petals, a woman is drawn with a pole of scale and a pail on her shoulder. Perhaps water is in those pails. Her hair style is called is “Toro-bin” (燈籠びん) and she is well costumed. She is quite different with woman around her with an apron and their breast exposed. She looks some stranger, but she may be native. She also looks like a “Shamisen” (三味線) player. Such a lady as this working among workers with naked on pants tucks up to the back. She bears a pail with putting on airs.

This tells that, at this season, various people including ladies join the farmers. They happen to help the busy working people in the villages. Or they intend to earn money in a daily employment. “Yamagata-zakki” (『山形雑記』) reports that there were so many daily employed women at that season. Anyhow, we confirm the working scenes in every village.



Woman with pails

③ Blind Itinerant Men

In the process of ⑫ “Drying Petals”, a man is standing by with a stick, being held by a woman and he is cherishing a shamisen in his breast. But they may be a blind couple-blind itinerant people. Then a man is approaching and calling. The blind man stands his fingers to show a fare. The man approaching was told the fare for playing the instrument. It may be free time in busy working. This scene is one of the village scenes of busy benibana season.



Blind strolling players

④ Begging Person

In the process of ⑫, a woman is sitting on the ground among busy workers to dry petals on straw mat.

She puts on a towel on the head and bears a mat, tools and small stuffs on her back. A back sheet for working also is seen. The costume doesn't look poor but she stretches out her hands holding a bit large bowl. She must be a beggar. She comes here to expect to earn money from the other village.

Most of the men ignore her but children look her from a distance, pointing a finger to her. Their mother also stares her with them. The painter must have shown the people's sympathy to the beggar.



Beggar? (a sitting man on the ground at the right)

(5) Various Figures

The other various figures are painted singularly as follows.

- ① A man walking to the village with a stick and many of fish on his back on the lane of rice paddy.



- ② An old woman and children to dry their washed stuffs on a pole.



- ③ A man walking on the lane, holding fish container and hook.



- ④ A short old woman talking about something with men.



These above don't tell what they mean. They may have nothing to do with benibana to show only a daily life.

5. Conclusion-What the Painter Intends

“The Benibana Picturescroll” is a series of pictures from the cultivation to the shipment as current goods. What did the painter intend to show?

Maybe he intended to show the processes to the later generation. Or he painted the scroll as a work of artificial painting.

The problem doesn't settle here. In the scroll, the figures of working men are vividly painted. On the other hand, curious people come together to get high profit from benibana and many active trading are minutely draw out. The painter wanted to draw human dramas and the farmers' villages as they are.

“The Benibana Picturescroll” depicts that dramas putting its focus on reports and on its own processes, so the painter has only to pursue its artistic aspects, not to paint its dark sides. No signature on the scroll may come from such an

intention. What he painted on the scroll is another substantial aspect in the villages where farmers lead their peaceful life. That also means the historical reality of Yamagata Dewa. In the result, we can appreciate the modern culture of this area. This viewpoint makes us to look back the real aspects of the villages again from various points.

Acknowledgement

The moment to start to write this report comes from the lecture of March 11, 2006 held by Geikyo (芸協) of Yamagata Prefecture. The given title was “On the Benibana Picturescroll” but at that chance, some study on the picturescroll was beyond my scope. Only the study of folk life was reported. So the report this time is focused by what I left behind then. Again, the study from life and cultural standpoint are considered. The author wishes the fundamental study will be pursued by the chance of comprehensive study including history, folk study and art together. Then, this report is only the clue to the deeper examination of the Takeda’s Scroll.

Lastly, the author should like to give deep appreciation to Mr. Akira Takeda who is generous to take the picture of “The Benibana Picturescroll” and its examination.

And the Yamagata Museum of Art is also generous to give the chance to take picture of “The Benibana Folding Screen” and the Yamadera Basho Museum gave the good will to take “The Benibana Folding Screen!” by Eiko Aoyama.

The author would heartily give them gratitude for those kind regards.

Note : (Concerning the detail below, see Japanese originals at the end of this paper.).

1. Shinichi Konta ; *Some topics of Benibana*
(Koyodo, 1980)
2. Koheiji Goto ; *Meibutsu Beninosode*
(Agriculture and Fishery Culture Corp., 1730)
3. Kanrakuan antaibo ; *Benibana – seiri – gushinsho*

(Yamagata City History Materials, 1904)

4. See 3. above

5. See 2. above

6. Shigeru Tamanoi ; *Yamagata-meisho-annai, Matsuno-Kimakura*

(Published by Matsuno Kimakura, 1984)

7. Shinichi Konta ; *Ten Topics of Bambina History*

(Published by Kahoku Town, 1956)

8. See 1. above

9. Yojiemon Saze ; *Aizu-Nosho*

(Agricultural and

Fishery Culture Corp, 1684)

10. Kanrakuan-Antaibo ; *Benibana Plucking as Folk Event*

(Yamagata City Historical Material, vol.13, 1908)

11. See 2. above

12. See 6. above

13. Masataka Ichimusai ; *Yamagata Ishihiro*

(Yamagata City Historical Material, 1767)

14. See 2. above

15. Yuho Yamase ; *Yamagata Miscellaneous, 1767 – 1845*

(See 13 above)

Scene of violence and confusion painted by Kazan Yokoyama in “The Benibana Folding Screen”

